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SUBJECT: AMERICAN-TURKISH ASSOCIATION STAFFDEL FOCUSES ON
IRAQ, PKK, ARMENIAN GENOCIDE RESOLUTION

1.(SBU) Summary: American-Turkish Council (ATC) staff members focused on Iraq, the terrorist PKK organization, and a potential Armenian genocide resolution (AGR) during August 7-8 meetings in Turkey with MFA and Turkish business officials. MFA U/S Apakan told the group that a U.S. withdrawal would exacerbate problems in Iraq, and that the GOT needs concrete USG actions to counter the terrorist Kurdistan Workers, Party (PKK) there. Apakan also explained that passage of an AGR would complicate US-Turkish relations.

In Istanbul, the American Business Forum Turkey (ABFT) described how continuing PKK attacks and possible passage of an AGR could undermine U.S. companies, interest in Turkey. Staff members acknowledged the potential adverse effect of an AGR, and suggested the GOT and ABFT step up efforts to educate Congressional staff in Washington during the summer recess. End summary.

2.(SBU) MFA U/S Apakan told five Republican Senate staff members on August 7 that a U.S. failure in Iraq would be a failure for all. A precipitous American troop pullout would destabilize the region and have severe negative repercussions in Turkey. According to Apakan, sectarian divisions would prolong violence, and it would take ten years to stabilize Iraq. UN support would help, but stability and progress ultimately would depend on continued USG presence and increased dialogue between the USG and Iraq's neighbors.

3.(SBU) Apakan reiterated GOT policy that Turkey has a right to defend itself from terrorism by undertaking a cross-border military operation (CBO) against the PKK in Northern Iraq. He stressed that Turkey must see more cooperation from the U.S. soon to alleviate the necessity of a CBO.

4.(SBU) Turning to the AGR, Apakan emphasized that passage of an AGR would severely strain US-Turkish relations. The Turkish public would be outraged, making cooperation with the USG difficult. Apakan stressed that Turkey has opened its historical archives so that any scholar may study the issue, and has asked Armenia to do the same. The GOT has offered to convene a joint historical commission with Armenia to study the issues, and Turkey has agreed to accept the conclusions of such a body, he said.

5.(SBU) At a separate August 9 meeting in Istanbul with the American Business Forum Turkey (ABFT), ABFT board members

described a steady improvement in Turkey's business climate over the past several years and were optimistic that recent election results would result in continued pro-business policies. They noted that U.S. policy regarding PKK operations in northern Iraq and the potential passage of an AGR could adversely affect U.S. companies doing business in Turkey. The perception that the U.S. is "doing nothing" to stop the PKK from using northern Iraq as a base to attack Turkey was widespread, ABFT Vice Chairman Jeff Kemprecos explained, and the ill-will created by this perception could easily spread to U.S. companies. The lack of "kinetic action" by the U.S. military is particularly difficult to explain, commented one defense sector representative.

6.(SBU) Chairman of the Board Galip Sukaya stressed that passage of an AGR would definitely hurt U.S. companies operating in Turkey. Board members representing the consumer products and food and beverage industries told Staffdel members that the effect of an AGR would also be felt by U.S. companies throughout the region, particularly in Azerbaijan. A representative from the defense sector noted that French defense firms had been effectively black-listed from all military equipment tenders following passage of a related piece of legislation by the lower house of the French parliament.

7.(SBU) Staffdel members encouraged ABFT to work closely with business headquarters in the United States, as well as industry groups, to convey their concerns on AGR directly to House staff before the end of August. They also encouraged MFA officials to meet with House staffers to explain the GOT position during this summer's recess.

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